

REMARKS

This amendment responds to the office action mailed June 14, 2006. Claims 1-7 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 8 has been amended to recite distinguishing subject matter and to otherwise adjust the claim language. Claims 9 and 11 have been amended to remedy an informality and for consistency with claim 8, respectively, and these amendments to these claims are not intended to narrow the claim scope. New claims 14-23 have been added herein. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

ART REJECTIONS

The Office Action includes a rejection of claims 8-13 under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Moore et al. (US Patent Publication 2003/0196312) in view of Abe et al. (USP 4,611,380). Applicant does not concede that the Office's combination of Moore et al. and Abe et al. is proper. Nevertheless, claim 8 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion to recite certain distinguishing subject matter not disclosed by the Office's combination of references. Thus, as discussed below, even if the system of Moore et al. were hypothetically modified in view of disclosure of Abe et al. as suggested by the Office, the modified system would not possess the combination of features recited in independent claim 8.

In particular, in the Final Office Action, the Examiner suggested amending the claims to specify that "the second tag is attached to a component being added to a product and that the main product and the component are separately [tagged] items." Final Office Action at page 3, paragraph 6. In view of the Examiner's suggestion, claim 8 has been amended to recite, "automatically reading a second information tag *accompanying* said component, *said component and said first portion being separately tagged*," in combination with the other recited features. The language "accompanying" is preferred over the Examiner's suggestion

of "attached to" so as to more clearly reflect that the information tag can be provided with the component in any suitable fashion, such as but not limited to, for example, attaching a tag (e.g., with an adhesive or a fastener) to the component, hanging a tag on the component, stamping a tag into the component, engraving a tag into the component, etc. As the Examiner evidently appreciates, Moore et al. and Abe et al., even if combined in the manner suggested in the Office Action, do not disclose the combination of features recited in amended claim 8. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 8 are respectfully requested. Claims 9-13 are allowable at least by virtue of dependency.

NEW CLAIMS

Claims 14-23 have been added herein to round out the scope of protection being sought. Independent claims 14 and 19 recite, *inter alia*, that a first information tag accompanies the first portion of the item and that a second information tag accompanies the component to be added to the item. Claims 14 and 19 are distinguishable over the Office's combination of Moore et al. and Abe et al. at least for this reason. Allowance of claims 14-23 is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider this application. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney if a telephone call could help resolve any remaining items.

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Respectfully submitted,

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